Remarks by official representative of the President of the Russian Federation, Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov at a plenary session of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on the ratification of treaties between the Russian Federation and the DPR, the LPR and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions, and on the creation of new regions in the Russian Federation, October 3, 2022

Esteemed Mr Volodin,

Esteemed members of the State Duma,

Colleagues,

I am submitting for your consideration the draft laws on the ratification of the treaties between the Russian Federation and the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republic and the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions on admitting them to the Russian Federation and on the creation of new regions in the Russian Federation.

This process has logically continued the reunification of Russian territories, which started with the return of the Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol in 2014. At that time, we saved the population of the peninsula from the mortal threats coming from Ukraine's Maidan authorities after an armed coup d'etat in Kiev in February 2014. These eight years have not taught the Kiev regime anything. With the connivance and direct support of its Western overseers, Kiev trampled underfoot international agreements, including the Minsk agreements that had been unanimously approved by the UN Security Council.

Ukraine's armed forces and militants in nationalist groups have been killing the people of Donbass and the neighbouring regions with

impunity only because they refused to share the neo-Nazi aspirations of the country's new leadership and decided to uphold their rights as guaranteed by the Constitution of Ukraine, including the right to the free use of their native Russian language.

For a long eight years, Kiev has been purposefully destroying the civil infrastructure of the Donetsk and Lugansk republics. It has imposed a financial, transport and energy siege on Donbass. It cut off the residents of these regions from their social benefits, pensions, salaries and wages, banking services, communications, education and healthcare. It deprived them of the elementary civil rights that are guaranteed, in part, by the 1966 international covenants on economic, social and cultural rights and on civil and political rights.

In the spring of 2014, the people of Donbass created independent people's republics to preserve their own civilisational identity and their lives. Due to Kiev's refusal to grant them special status, as required by the Minsk agreements, and the preparations by Ukraine's armed forces to seize their territory, we were left with no other choice but to recognise their independence on February 21, 2022 within the borders fixed in the constitutions of these republics. At these republics' request, a special military operation was announced to be conducted to protect the people of the republics under their right to self-defence as sealed in the UN Charter.

Ukrainian nationalist-radicals continue sowing lawlessness as regards the Russian and Russian-speaking population in other areas of Ukraine as well. Real threats to the lives and safety of people are on the rise. This applies to crude and massive human rights violations, including discrimination and persecution based on ethnic origin, language, religion and political conviction. During these years, the Kiev regime has been waging a comprehensive campaign against the Russian language, pervasively cancelling Russian culture, harassing the canonical Orthodox Church and falsifying Russia and Ukraine's common history. The Kiev regime has been destroying books and monuments to those who liberated Ukraine from German occupation and who forged glory for the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic in the

USSR. Laws encouraging Nazi theory and practice were adopted at the same time. Due to all these actions, the regions where the Russian language, culture and history are part of the peoples' national identity found it impossible to exist in the framework of the Ukrainian state.

Accusing Russia of an unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, the United States is hypocritically noting that we are allegedly using an imaginary threat to justify our attack on a neighbouring country, which, they say, has embarked on the path of democracy. Washington has never hesitated to use force under fabricated pretexts anywhere in the world, using false claims to justify its actions such as the need to protect the lives and well-being of US citizens. This was the case in 1915 in Haiti, half a century later in the Dominican Republic, when all they did before starting an invasion was publicly declare abstract threats to individual US citizens. Before the occupation of Panama, then US President George H.W. Bush, in his address to the nation in December 1989, told the dramatic story about one fatally shot American soldier, another one arrested, and yet another one beaten, whose wife, allegedly, underwent rough interrogation and was threatened with rape. This was enough to invade these countries and install governments that suited Washington.

Not to mention the many years of a bloody war in Vietnam, in which the United States became embroiled after a provocation that they themselves staged in the Gulf of Tonkin. I'm not even talking about the attack on Grenada in 1983 to allegedly ensure the safety of American students studying there.

The United States ignored the UN General Assembly resolutions that condemned these and other aggressive actions; it just let them go unheeded. Then there was Yugoslavia, which the United States and NATO tried to bomb into democracy, the destroying of Iraq, where weapons of mass destruction were never found, and Libya that was plunged into chaos.

The moment of truth has come. We are not responding to imaginary threats in distant countries, but are defending our borders, our

Motherland, all our people from real genocide perpetrated by the descendants and followers of Nazi henchmen, who are now at the service of their overseas masters. The United States has subjugated almost all of the collective West and mobilised it in order to make Ukraine a tool of war against Russia just like, in his time, Hitler called to arms most of the European countries to attack the Soviet Union. The current plans of the West will not come to fruition just like they didn't back then. President Vladimir Putin was clear about that when speaking at the Kremlin on September 30.

The people of the Zaporozhye and Kherson regions liberated from the oppression of the neo-Nazi Kiev regime, have independently determined their future, which is to be with Russia. Following in the steps of the DPR and LPR, these regions declared independence, which was recognised by presidential executive orders dated September 29. Following that, the DPR and LPR, as well as Zaporozhye and Kherson regions asked Russian leadership to accept them as part of our state. These requests were based on free will as expressed by the people in the referenda. We respect these results, which are consistent with international law, including the principle of the sovereign equality of states, equality, and the right of peoples to self-determination enshrined as a goal in the UN Charter.

In accordance with the Federal Constitutional Law on the Procedure of Admission into the Russian Federation of a New Entity and the Formation of a New Entity Thereof, the President of the Russian Federation notified the Federation Council, the State Duma, and the Government of the Russian Federation about the proposals of the said republics and regions, and signed the relevant agreements with them.

According to the established procedure, the Constitutional Court of Russia verified the correspondence of the agreements to the Constitution of the Russian Federation and delivered a positive conclusion.

The agreements legally seal the accession of the said republic and regions to Russia and provide for the creation of new constituent

entities of the Russian Federation: the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republics, the Zaporozhye Region, and the Kherson Region. The agreements entitle the permanent residents of these territories to Russian citizenship with all the ensuing rights.

On behalf of the President of the Russian Federation, I address the State Duma with a proposal to adopt the said draft laws.

I am convinced that their approval will benefit the entire multi-ethnic people of our country, and the citizens of the Donetsk People's Republic, the Lugansk People's Republics, the Zaporozhye Region, and the Kherson Region will now rightly become part of this people within the Russian Federation.

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Sergey Lavrov: I would like to congratulate the representatives of the four new constituent entities of the Russian Federation. I am convinced that the next package of constitutional laws will also be adopted.

Vyacheslav Volodin: This is exactly what everyone expected of you. You are a diplomat and diplomats always read what is written between the lines. Everyone "read" what was required.

Sergey Lavrov: Nothing is written between the lines in this case. Everything is absolutely clear. Colleagues, my congratulations once again!